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CIA 4 Congo
Tshombe, Moise

U.S. Is Suspect In Tshombe Case

Without elaboration, Moise Tshombe told the Algerian court that he was "the victim of an American CIA plot."

British newspaper reports had said earlier there was speculation in Belgium and Algeria that the piratical kidnaping of the former Congo Prime Minister was the work of the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

The Algerian Supreme Court ruled that Tshombe, who was spirited out of Spanish jurisdiction in a hi-jacked plane, must return to the Congo to die before President Joseph D. Mobutu's firing squad.

Tshombe first came into world prominence as leader of Katanga Province's secession in 1960. This movement was defeated by the United Nations in a war fostered by the United States.

After the last UN troops left the Congo, Premier Cyrille Abdoula resigned and was succeeded by Tshombe, who was ousted by President Kasavubu in 1965 and sent into exile.

Evariste Kimba became Premier, but both he and Kasavubu were put out of office by Gen. Joseph Mobutu, who named himself President and took over all legislative powers from Parliament. A Mobutu kangaroo court put Kimba to death at a public hanging, giving the victim no chance for a legal defense. A similar court decreed Tshombe's death when it tried him in absentia.

Tshombe's cardinal sin in the eyes of the black nationalists of Africa was that he appreciated the value of the European in the civil service, industry and commerce. He not only employed them to help raise stan-

dards and prevent chaos, but imported white mercenaries to quell a rebellion. Black nationalists considered this an affront to African nationalism.

Nationalism is an American cause. It was promulgated by Soapy Williams, Secretary of State for African Affairs, with the slogan, "Africa for the Africans." The United States is a strong supporter of the Mobutu government. President Johnson recently sent U. S. planes and servicemen to the Congo when white mercenaries were involved in a rebellion.

After the part played by the United States, either actively or passively, in the assassination of the leaders in South Vietnam's Diem regime, this country is suspect in the Tshombe affair.

Senator Strom Thurmond pointed out that if the U. S. fails to make strong representations to the Algerian government to prevent the scheduled extradition of Tshombe to be executed, "his blood will be on our hands."

There is too much blood letting in Africa already without the United States' becoming a party to it. A humanitarian gesture by our government to save Tshombe from murder might help to turn the continent back from a pathway of fear, brutality and indiscriminate killings. Doing nothing will put blame on the United States.

The Katangese and others of the Congo believe that Tshombe alone can bring freedom, prosperity and happiness to their country. If he is allowed to suffer an ignoble death, the anguished nation of tribes may be plunged into savage civil war that will make the U. N.-Katanga confrontation look like a skirmish.